

A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D

On the First of *January*, 1698.

IN THE
Parish Church of *St. Nicholas Cole-Abby.*

BEING

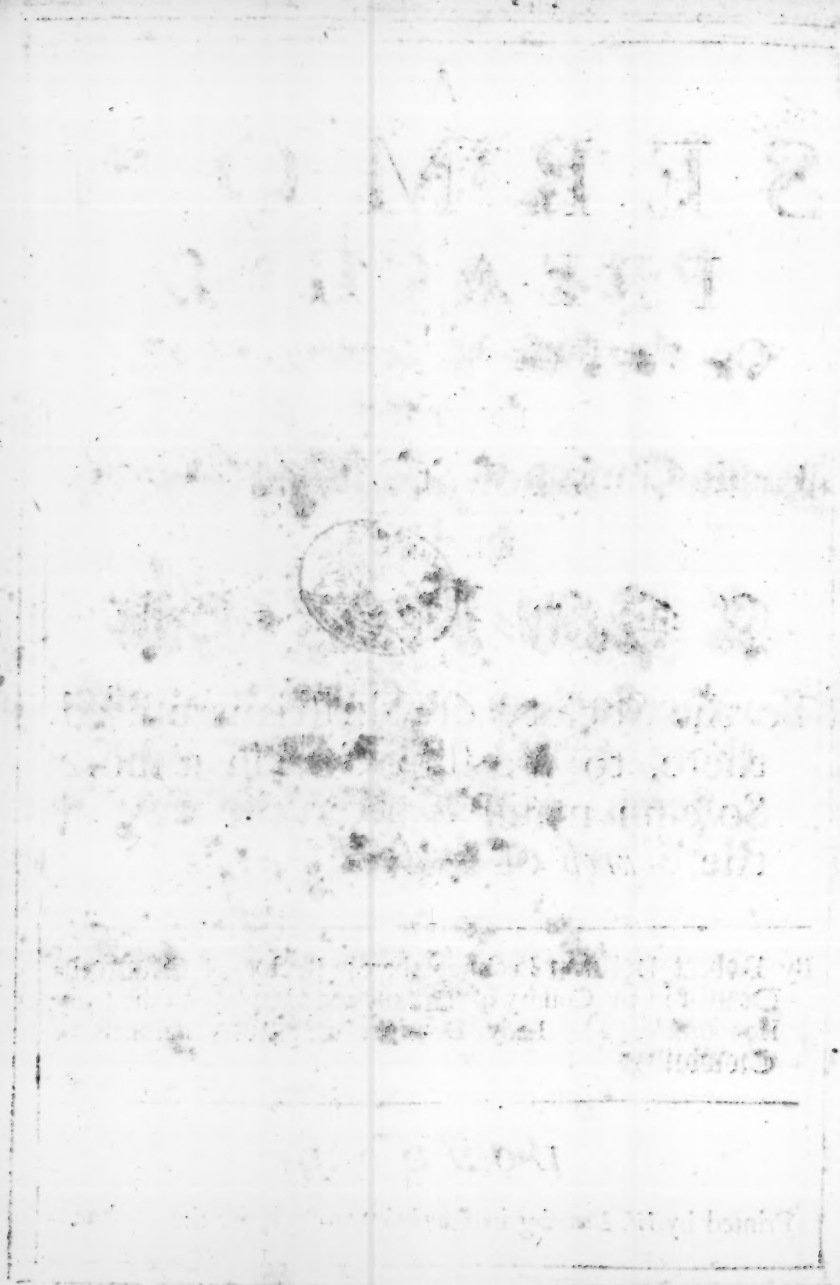
A New-Bears-Gift

To the Society of Christians united
there, to Worship God in a more
Solemn manner, after the way of
the *Church of England.*

By Robert Howson Lecturer there; Rector of *Stanford-*
Deanly in the County of *Berks*, and Chaplain to the truly
Honourable, The Lady Dowager *Seymore*, Barones of
Croftbridge. K

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L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. Downing* in *Bartholomew-Close*, for the Author.



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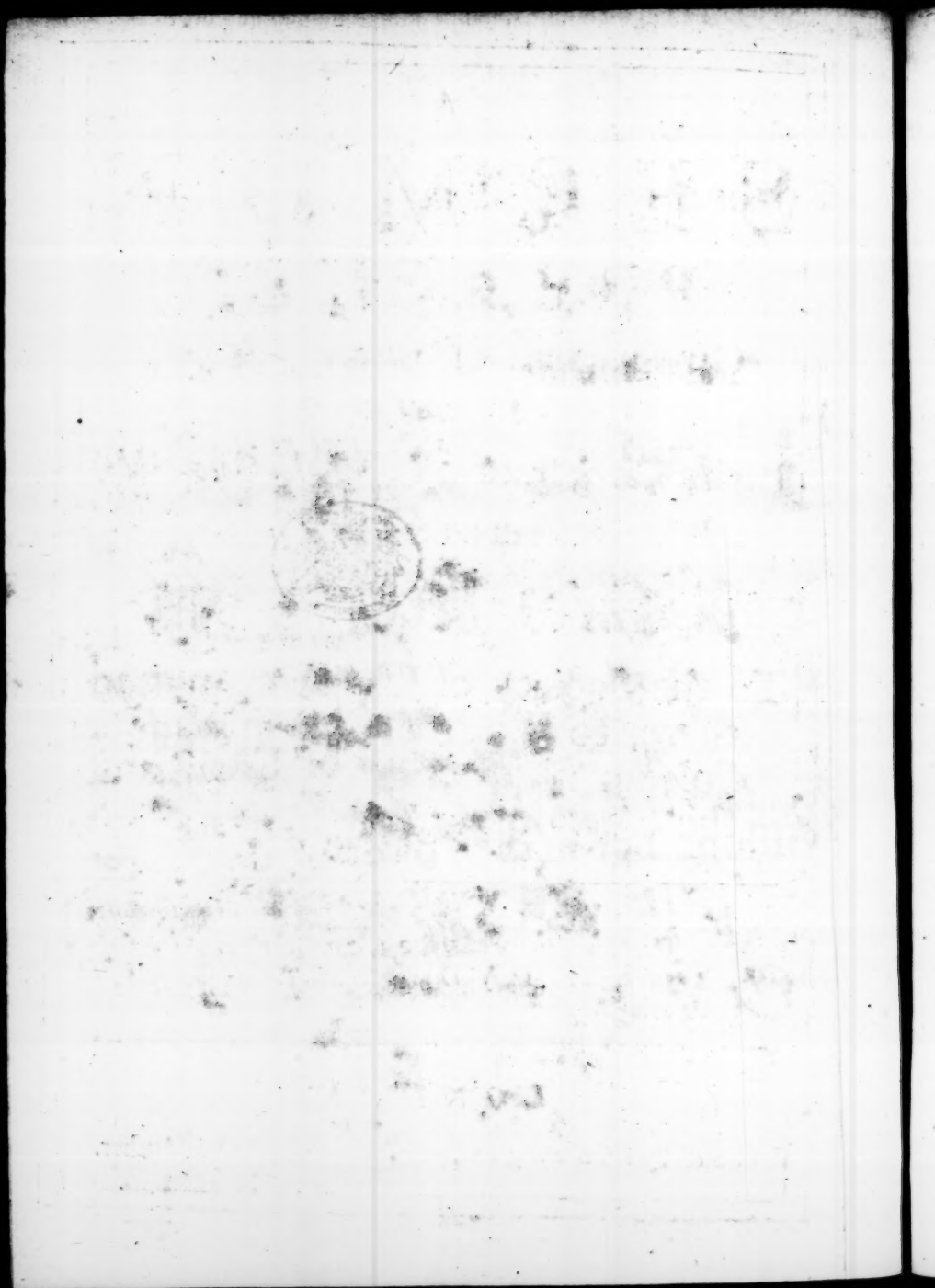
A New = Years = Gift

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To the Stewards, Collectors, and the rest of
the Members of the Society of St. Nicholas
Cole-Abby, in the City of London.

Dear Friends,

THE ensuing Sermon came to the Pulpit
by your Desire, and by the same it comes
from the Press, with no Variation, and
but with very little Addition.

Fine Cadencies of Speech, well clinched Periods,
and harangues of Rhetorick, were never my
Talent; or if they had, I would have Napkin'd it
in the Pulpit, that the Faith of Christians,
should not be thought to stand in Words of Mans
Wisdom, but in the Power of God: For
which purpose, that most excellent Prelate and
Gospel Preacher, Arch-Bishop Usher, laid aside
all his Learning, in Preaching the Gospel, as
appears by his plain and practical Discourses
yet Extant. And (as I have heard) gave it
always in charge to such, on whom he laid Hands
to Preach, to be sure to remember the Al-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

leys, by suiting their Sermons to the Capacities of their Hearers. *A course that for Thirty Years past, I have always found most conducing to the great end of Preaching, viz. Turning Men from Darkeness to Light, and from Satan's Power to God. And therefore shall continue in it, till I am convinc'd that plain Preachers, and plain Hearers, shall be as much decried in another World as they are in this.*

Gentlemen, in this Respect your Lines are saln in a pleasant place, you have a goodly Heritage, even the Blessing of a learned, pious, practical, and savory Ministry: May it be therefore a Saviour of Life unto Life, unto every one of you, and not of Death unto Death unto any, (for it will certainly be one or the other) is, and ever shall be, the Prayer of

Your Affectionate Friend,

And Faithful Servant

In the Greatest Work,

ROBERT HOWSON.

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John XIII. Ver. 34.

*A New Commandment I give unto you, That
you Love one another.*

THere is nothing that doth more
conduce to the Good of Mankind,
in general, than being good to,
and doing good one for another, in par-
ticular.

This engages the Affections, and ex-
cites the Endeavours of all: This mono-
polizeth all the Strength and Powers of
Men, not only for one another, but also
for the publick *Communities* and *Societies*
of which they are *Members*.

This answers the End of mens Being in
this lower World, and glorifies that Eter-
nal Goodness, that is their Being in this
Life, and will for ever be their Blessedness
in another.

On the contrary, There is nothing doth more directly tend to destroy the Souls and Bodies, the Liberties and Properties of Men, in particular, and the Good of publick Societies, in general, than Selfishness, Pride, and Covetousness: This ham-strings all just Powers, weakens Authority, cuts all the Ligaments of the Body Politick, makes every part loose and independent one upon another, like Bones wiew'd in an Anatomy: And therefore, our Blessed Saviour fore-seeing how necessary this would be in all the Churches of God, to the End of the World, enjoins this great Catholick and Christian Duty, *To Love one another*; which He calls, *A New Commandment*; that is, the Old Commandment that God gave by Moses, (*Levit. 19. 18.*) renewed under the Gospel Dispensation, for which he proposeth himself as an excellent Pattern, saying, *As I have Loved you.*

In speaking to which, I shall shew,

- I. *What 'tis to Love another.*
- II. *What are the good Effects of Loving one another, in the Hearts and Lives of good Men.*
- III. *How it makes Men easie in and to themselves, to the Government, and Communion they are Members of in this World. And,*
- IV. *How it fits them for the Communion and Blessed Society of the glorified Saints in Heaven.*

By *Loving one another*, understand that Brotherly Love that the Apostle commends, *Heb. 13. 1.* which is such a Love as Brothers have, or ought to have, one towards another in Nature, who have the same Father, and the same Mother, from whom they derive their Natural Lives.

Brethren, we have all the same Father, which is *God*; and the same Mother,

which is our *Church*; and from them we derive our vital Principle of Spiritual Life: And therefore, as they that are Born after the Flesh, do love one another in a Natural manner; so we that are Born after the Spirit, should love one another in a Spiritual manner: For Spirits have their Spiritual Actings and Motions one towards another, as well as Bodies.

Where the Appearance is of God's Holiness in the Hearts and Lives of good Men, it draws out a Spiritual Love to, and delight in them, one towards another. *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my Goodness extendeth not unto thee; But to the Saints, and to the Excellent that are in the Earth, in whom is all my delight, Psal. 16. 2, 3.*

And as the appearance of Goodness, in good Men, draws them one to another in holy Delight and Love; so the Light of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus, draws them all to Christ:
Because

Because of the savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is poured forth: therefore do the Virgins love thee: Cant. 1. 3. Draw me, and we will run after thee. Therefore, saith our Blessed Saviour, *No Man can come unto me, except the Father draw him, and the Father draws (and never drives) by the Cords of a Man, by the Bands of Love, Hosea 11. 4. displaying the Riches of Gospel-Grace, viz. the heighth, and depth, the length, and breadth, of the Love of God in Christ: Love in all dimensions, and all dimensions in their Abstract; so that as many as look unto Jesus, till they love Him, and love Him so as to obey Him, purely from a Principle of Divine Love implanted in them, by the Ministration of the Gospel, shall be Saved by Him.*

Now, as natural Motion is a sure sign of natural Life, so these spiritual Motions of Holy Souls, to desire after and delight in good Men as such, are infallible symptoms of Spiritual Life: *For*
by

by this we know that we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren, Joh. 1. 3, 4. In which words, by (*the Brethren*) I humbly conceive such, and all such, and none but such, as have received the Faith of the Gospel, and did publickly profess, and piously practise it, according as they had received from the Apostles, *how they ought to walk and to please God*; and so were Disciples of the Crucified Jesus, abstractedly considered, without any relation to their being of *Paul*, or *Apollo*, or *Cephas*, according as some did most uncharitably and factiously discriminate themselves, 1 Cor. 3. 4. which Love to the Brethren, as such was then, is now, and for ever will be an infallible sign of passing from Death to Life.

Now, may the God of Life and Love, which brought again our Lord Jesus Christ from the Dead, (out of his boundless Love to his Church) perswade us all in this divided Age, to be like-minded one towards another, and towards

wards all that fear God, and work Righteousness, of what Opinion soever we are, in lesser Points of Christianity: But while one judgeth, another despieth; while one saith and swaggereth, I am of *Apollo*, another I am of *Paul*, another I am of *Cephas*, we are all carnal, and talk and walk as Men; *For the Kingdom of God is not in these things, but in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, Ro. 14. 17.* And the same Apostle tells us, as plainly as words can speak, *That Circumcision is nothing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature:* And that as many as walk according to that Rule, *viz.* that do not make Christianity to be in one or the other, but in the Change and turn of the whole man to God, which (as that Holy Man of God, Arch-Bishop *Usher*, hath long since told us) is *the new Creature*: Peace shall be to them, even that Peace (which our Church teacheth us to pray for in one of her excellent Collects) which the World cannot give, even *the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding.* MORE-

Moreover, this vital Principle of Spiritual life and love, is that only, that makes us Christians indeed; *For if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Ro. 8. 9.*

This doth not only incline the Soul to God, and to good Men, who bear the Reflexions of his Holy Nature, but likewise to the sincere Obedience of his Will and Law; invigorating all the Powers and Faculties of their Minds, in all their Operations and Motions; in-lightning their Understandings, by *turning them from Darkness to Light, and from Satans Power to God*; delightfully inclining their Wills to Goodness; turning their natural enmity into love; fulfilling that Prophetical Gospel-Promise, *To make his People a willing People in the Day of his Power, Psal. 110. 3.* and according as our Saviour in his most Heavenly form hath taught us to Pray, *Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, even with that Readiness and Alacrity, that Delight and Com-

Complacency, that the Angels and glorified Saints do it with in Heaven, and as He did it when he was in the World, *Whose Meat and Drink it was to do the Will of him that sent him.*

This divine Principle brings the Soul into a divine frame, and Gospel Temper, making it to be in some good measure of that Heavenly Spirit that our Blessed Redeemer was of when he was upon Earth. And therefore he tells his Disciples, *Ye are not of the World, but I have taken you out of the World: If you were of the World, the World would love its own; but because you are not of the World, therefore the World hateth you,* Joh. 15. 19. Ye are not of the Temper and Spirit of the World: The first Man is of the Earth, earthy, and speaketh of the Earth; but the second Man is the Lord from Heaven, heavenly, and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly; their Conversations are in Heaven, and their Hearts are where their Treasures are; they look and live above.

Invisibles are to them the greatest Realities; they antedate the Joys of Heaven: *Faith is (to them) the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11. 1.* They persevere, as having *a respect to the recompence of the Reward, and as seeing him that is Invisible, whom having not seen (as the Apostle says) with their bodily eyes, yet believing on him, are filled with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.*

This makes Men easy to themselves, in bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are *Meekness and Temperance, Love, and Joy, and Peace, Long Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, and Faith; against such there is no Law, Gal. 5. 22.* having by the power of the divine Spirit overcome the corruptions of their Nature, which made them mighty uneasie to themselves; but now, where the Spirit of divine Life and Love dwells, there are these divine and blessed Fruits, which make Men easy in, and to themselves, by giving them the Victory over all their turbulent and dis-

disquieting Passions, setting up the Intellectual & Rational power in its due place, reducing the Man to *himself*, and unto *God*, which is a mighty point when obtained.

*Fortior est qui se, quam qui tutissima vincit
Mœnia.*——

which, to Translate the Poet by the Prophet, is, *He that overcometh his own Spirit, is as he that taketh a City.*

So much have our Corruptions and Passions got the ascendant of our Reasons, in this our lapsed State, that the Prophet calls such *the Beast of the People*: And 'tis not improbable that they were such *Beasts* with whom St. Paul fought at *Ephesus*, 1 Cor. 15. which he in another place, calls *unreasonable Men*.

Finally, Brethren, pray for us, that we may be delivered from *unreasonable and wicked Men*, 2 Thes. 3. 1, 2. where *unreasonable and wicked Men* are put together, because all Wickedness is unreasonable, 'tis the very extremity of Madness and Folly.

And this doth not only make Men easy to themselves, but to all others: How easily are such Men Govern'd by the Laws of Civil Government, (which are all grounded upon Reason) who make their own Reason to govern themselves? To them (as the Apostle calls the moral Law) the Law may be as a School-master to instruct, and now and then to correct some mistakes that must be allowed for the Frailty of human Nature, but it can never be a Judge to Condemn them; for, as where there is no Law, there is no Transgression; so where there is no Transgression, there can be no Punishment: There is therefore, saith St. Paul, *No Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.*

This Spirit of holy Life and Love, makes all good Men, fit for all humane Conversation in this World.

All

All the Commotions and Troubles, not only within our Selves, but within our Houses, our Towns and Cities, our Kingdom and our Church, proceed from our unsubdu'd Corruptions, our Pride and Covetousness, our Revenge and Malice, and the like. *From whence come Warrings and Fightings among you? Come they not from hence, even from your Lusts, that War in your Members? For ye Lust, and have not; ye Kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain, Jam. 4. 1, 2.* As much as if St. James had said, *By these rampant and reigning Lusts of yours, you make all the mischief in the World, and when you have done all, you get nothing by it.*

And then, how fit these good Men are for all humane Societies and Government, who have, by the power of divine Grace, mortified these Lusts of their Members, which make all the Troubles and Confusions in the lower World, you may easily Judge: And therefore, let Brotherly love continue among us, (my Dear Friends) that we may be what we
are

are all Born for, *viz.* a Blessing to our selves, and to the best of Governments we live under, and the best of Churches we are Members of.

This is the very Spirit and Life of Christian Religion, which as St. James saith, chap. 3. ver. 15. *Is not earthly, sensual, and devilish, but the contrary, divine, heavenly, and spiritual, coming from above: A Religion, or Wisdom, which is all one, (for Religion is the highest Wisdom) that hath infinite Love for its Author and End, that gives Spiritual Laws to govern the Hearts and Spirits of Men. Mens Words and Actions fall under the Cognizance of human Laws, these are things, as Job saith, To be tryed by the Judge; but the thoughts, and imaginations of the Heart, fall under the cognizance of the Spiritual Law of the God of Spirits, who will Judge the secrets of all Men according to his Gospel.*

A Religion that exalts and perfects Mans Nature, that gives him true Understanding, Power and Goodness;
and

and that, as Sin hath ras'd out and defaced the Image of God, imprest upon his Divinely created Soul, this reprints it there, and restores him again in some good measure to his pure & Paradisiacal State; *According as his divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to Glory and Vertue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust, 2 Pet. chap. i. vers. 3, 4.*

This is the fulfilling of the whole Law, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might. This is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour as thy self. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets, Mat. 22. 37, 38, 39, 40. Love worketh all Obedience to God, and sincere Obedience is the greatest demonstration of*
our

our Love to him: *If you love me, keep my Commandments.*

He that loveth God with all his Heart, will never own another God besides him; much less will he make to himself any graven Image, or the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven or Earth; For, *whereunto will you liken me saith the Lord?*

He that loveth God truly, will worship him in Truth and Spirit; for he is an infinite, glorious, and incomprehensible Spirit; and therefore *he will be Worshiped in Spirit and Truth, Joh. 4. 24.* All Worship that is not Spiritual, of what Mode or Scheme soever it is, is no more than the cutting off a Dog's Neck, or the offering of Swines Blood: nay, though it be such as God himself hath commanded, as to the matter of it: *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices to me, saith the Lord: I am full of the Burnt Offerings of Rams, and the fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-Goats, &c.*
When

When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an abomination unto me, the New-Moons and Sabbaths, (though I have bid you remember to keep them Holy) are abomination to me, the calling of the Assemblies, I cannot away with, it is Iniquity, even the solemn Meeting. The New Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth; (speaking after the manner of Men-) they are a Trouble to me, I am weary to bear them, Isai. 1. 11, 12, 13, 14.

He that worships God truly, thinks it highly reasonable to give Him a Worship suitable to his own blessed Nature; not only as to the matter, but also as to the manner of his Worship: And therefore he strives, and wrestles; he fights, and runs; he is *Fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11.

He that loveth God truly, will never lightly use or Prophane his Great Name, neither any of his Divine Attributes, which are himself, nor his Word or Works.

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He that loveth God truly, will honour every thing that hath any relation to, or beareth any reflexion of his Holiness, especially his Holy Day, which because of the extraordinary Holiness that God hath imprest upon it, is Prefac'd with a *Remember; Remember to keep Holy the Sabbath Day*; not only in the external performance of external Worship, but in secret Prayer, Meditation, Self-Examination, Holy Conferences, and Spiritual Anhelations, in which, the Souls of good Men have a most Heavenly Communion, and Fellowship with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have Fellowship with us: And truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* The moral part of this Precept is, to keep one Day in seven in this Heavenly Work; and where this is done, it kindles such a sacred fire upon the Altar of the Heart, that burns from Sabbath to Sabbath, which was lively typified by the
Fire

Fire upon the Altar, under the *Jewish* Oeconomy, and is always attended with all the Blessings of this Life: *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy Pleasure on my Holy-Day, and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own Ways, nor finding thine own Pleasure, nor speaking thine own Words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the Earth, and feed thee with the Heritage of Jacob thy Father, Isa. 58. 13, 14.* The Glory of our Law, and of his Day too, Sir *Matthew Hales* tells us, in his *Meditations*, “That when he had been “careful in the Work of this day, he “did observe that all his Business the “Week following did well succeed; but “when he had made a fault in this, he “soon found it in that.

He that loveth his Neighbour, cannot but love his Father and Mother, in the first place, and give unto all Men, especially to the King, and all that be in Authority,

that Duty and Obedience, that is due to them in their severall places and relations; *giving Honour, to whom Honour; Fear, to whom Fear is due.*

He that loveth his Neighbour as himself, can never have or harbour any Malice or Hatred in his heart against him; much less will he defile his Bed, or defraud him in his Estate, or go beyond him in any matter.

And he that loveth God with all his Heart, and his Neighbour as himself, doth good to himself too; for all Goodness and Vertue reflects it self upon him that hath it; like an Echo, bringing back the Voice to the ear of him that spake it. Every good Work that a good Man doth gives him that inward Comfort of Mind that the World knows nothing of, and strangers do not meddle with; whereby he receives much more good than he does: *In keeping of thy Commandments there is great reward,* Psal. 119. 11. Were there no such thing as a Heaven, to reward good Men;

Men; or a Hell, to punish bad, it were still worth while to live well, and to do good, to have the present comfort of it in this World; for, *all the ways of Wisdom are Peace, and her Paths are Pleasantness*, which all good Men do experience, better than they can express it. No Man can tell, so well as he can tast, how sweet Honey is; therefore, saith the Psalmist, *Thy Commandments are sweeter to me than the Honey, and the Honey Comb*, Psal. 19. 10. *Come, tast, and see how good the Lord is*: Truth leaves a Spiritual gust upon the Understanding, which doth mightily influence and incline the Will to every thing that is good; and as Truth is the Object of the one, so Goodness is the Object of the other, both which do most directly conduce to the Comfort and Happiness of a rational Being in this World, as well as in that which is to come.

Hereby the Love of God is manifested to, and perfected in this good Man. *Who so keepeth my Word, in him is the Love of*
 God

God perfected; that is, he surely loveth God, and is loved of God. Hereby we know that we are in God; For God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Hereby we dwell in light: He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in light, 1 Joh. 2. 5, 10. He dwelleth in the light of God's Favour; And in his Favour is Life, Psal. 30. And in another place 'tis said, That his Favour is better than Life, and infinitely better than all the Blessings of the lower World. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou hast put Gladness in my Heart, more than in the time when their Corn and their Wine increased, Psal. 4. 6, 7.

This only fits the Soul for the heavenly Light: *Epaphras* declaring the Love of the Spirit which was in the Church of *Coloss*, Col. 1. 7, 8. *Blessed be God, (saith St. Paul) who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light, ver. 12. Where the Soul is joyned to the Church*

Church of the first born, to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly of the Saints, to the Souls of Just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator: All which are joyning in their uncessant and uninterrupted Songs of Praise, Singing *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, to God, and to the Lamb that sits upon the Throne*, and are fill'd with all the fullness of God, and do for ever admire those Treasures of Light that are beyond them.

And as it fits the Soul for the Heavenly World, so it fills it with Bowels of Love and Pity to our poor Brethren; for if this be not in us, the Love of God is not in us: *If any Man say he loveth God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar: For he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, How can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also, 1 Joh. 4. 21, 22.*

How kindly doth our Blessed Saviour take what is done to his poor Members, *Matth. 25. 34. Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World: For I was Hungry, and you gave me Meat; I was Thirsty, and you gave me Drink, &c. Then shall the Righteous say, Lord, when saw we thee Hungry, and fed thee; Thirsty, and gave thee Drink, &c. Then shall the King say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, you have done it unto me. And therefore, let me beseech you, my Brethren, to give to Him in his Members, who gave Himself for you, not his Name only, nor his Body, but his Soul too, for that was made An Offering for Sin, Isa. 53. 10. Which was the greatest Gift that God could give, or the World could receive, and who is now Praying for you at the Right hand of his Father, to give you a Crown, a Kingdom, and a weight of Glory.*

And

And if we act like Men, possessed by true Charity, suiting with the Spirit of Christianity, our Hearts and Hands must be always open to our poor Brothers Necessities; our Souls must take pleasure in doing Good, and being Kind: And if we are not able to redress their Grievances, or relieve their Wants, by our Wealth, or Interest, we must ease them by our Compassion, comfort them by Holy Advice and Example, and succour them by our Prayers.

These are the Treasures which good Men lay up in Heaven, *Where neither Moths nor Rust doth Corrupt, nor Thieves break through, nor Steal*; For this purpose, saith our Saviour, you have the Poor always with you, and whatsoever you will you may do unto them, and in so doing, you will well and truly observe those Feasts of Charity St. Jude speaks of, *ver. 12.*

*Finally, Brethren, be all of one Mind,
having Compassion one of another: Love as
Brethren, be Pitiful, be Courteous, be of good
Comfort, live in Peace; And the God of Love and
Peace shall be with you all. Amen.*

F I N I S.

Advertisement.

WHereas there was lately Published an Erroneous Book, by one *Zachary Howsell*, who being Christianly taken notice of, and presented by the *Grand Jury* of *Middlesex*, as an *Author* of a most detestable *Doctrin*: And whereas the *Author* of this *Sermon* hath been most maliciously reported by many, and may possibly be believed by some, to be the same.

The *Author* hereof, to cashier the said malicious and scandalous *Report*, doth hereby declare, That he is not the same *Man*, neither did he ever believe any such *Doctrin* as is therein maintained, nor any other, either different from, or contrary to, *The Articles of the Church of England*, as by Law Established: Which said *Articles*, the *Author* doth Weekly Explain to his *Society*, to keep them steady in this giddy Age.

W

